



January 31, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallen, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Paul Schrader. I serve as the Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Lincoln County. We have been serving the children of Lincoln County for 25 years. Many of these children are survivors of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. At the Children's Advocacy Center of Lincoln County, we identify when child abuse has happened, and intervene to keep children safe and start them on the path toward healing.

I am requesting your support of HB 2732 to maintain the increased investment of \$6M in Children's Advocacy Centers made during the 2021 legislative session. Children's Advocacy Centers have been working with the Legislature to increase state funding, and we are truly thankful that our \$6M funding request was included in the Christmas Tree bill last session. As you know, the Christmas Tree bill was created as a one-time funding allocation, and CACs continually report that their greatest need is highly specialized staff. In fact, nearly every CAC reported using the 2021 funding for increased staff, or increased hours for existing staff.

The Children's Advocacy Center of Lincoln County lost its medical provider when she moved to a different state a few years ago. We didn't have adequate funds to search for and hire a replacement. The portion of the \$6M funding from this past biennium allocated to Lincoln County was sufficient for us to find and hire the specialized medical provider so desperately needed. After more than 2 years without this capability, our center is once again able to provide all medical services for the children of Lincoln County suspected or known to have been abused physically, sexually, neglected, or exposed to drugs or violence.

CACs serve all children regardless of their family's ability to pay, but the current level of state support means many children endure long waitlists for services. Worse, children might not be seen by a CAC at all. Instead, they may be interviewed in police stations or emergency rooms by staff with no specialized training to assess children for child abuse, and without the team of multidisciplinary experts working together— which is a cornerstone of the CAC approach.

Passing HB 2732 will move us closer to an Oregon where all children have access to a team of experts who are dedicated to supporting them, stopping abuse and beginning the process of healing. Please hold the progress you made to protect kids and continue the \$6M investment in CACs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Schrader". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.